

Buy-Side Technology

May 9, 2016

waterstechnology.com/buy-side-technology

Citco Previews Soon-to-be-Launched CitcoOne Platform

Anthony Malakian visits Citco's midtown Manhattan offices for a demo on the fund administrator's new CitcoOne platform. The aim of the solution: to make answering questions quick and easy.

The world of fund administration is staid and features modest innovation centered around the middle and back offices. Some providers are even working with decades-old accounting platforms.

It's in this environment that Citco Fund Services began to rethink its client portal. Obviously, the firm spoke with clients—about 15 initially—about what they'd like to see included in the new offering. But Citco also decided to go out to Silicon Valley to learn about the latest techniques around visualization and user experience. While fund administration is sedate, the technology doesn't have to be.

The other key component was centered on this hypothesis: Getting and storing the data is now relatively easy; making sense of all that information is the challenge.

This was the thinking behind Citco's soon-to-be-launched, built-from-the-ground-up client portal, CitcoOne, which incorporates innovative visualization technology to provide transparency

and the ability to drill down into huge datasets in order to clearly and easily answer queries.

“At any level of granularity you can re-pivot the dataset,” Nick Eisenlau, managing director at Citco Fund Services, tells Waters. “One of the challenges is, depending on what your job is, everywhere from the CFO to the controller to an operations specialist to someone in investor relations, your perspective on what information is relevant to you changes and the system has to be smart enough to take on the persona that you need, and give you a perspective of the world that's relevant for you.”

The Need to Mine

The buildout of CitcoOne started in June 2014. The platform is in active beta, currently. In February, it was demoed in New York, with a London demo set for June, with Asia, Chicago and San Francisco events to follow.

Despite its name, CitcoOne is a bifurcated platform split between investment managers and investors. There's a good reason for this split, as these two groups have very different needs, Eisenlau says.

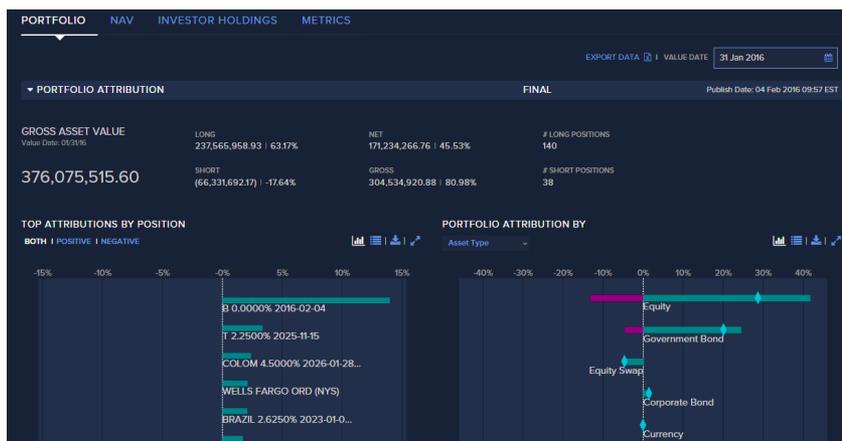
Full production and migration to CitcoOne will begin on June 1 for investment managers, with investor pages set for a September rollout. According to research firm eVestment, Citco is



Buy-Side Technology

May 9, 2016

waterstechnology.com/buy-side-technology



the second largest fund administrator globally in terms of assets under administration, with \$1.05 trillion, trailing only State Street Alternative Investment Solutions (\$1.84 trillion). The full reach of CitcoOne will exceed 75,000 users, globally, according to Eisenlau.

“We started with a blank slate from a technology perspective. We didn’t bring any frameworks into play,” he says. “In a lot of cases, what happens when you do these things is you take what you have today and re-skin it, make it look prettier, but the guts of it is still the same. We didn’t take that approach—it’s a completely different technical stack and it was designed where nothing was repeated.”

The legacy portal—dubbed Citco Online or Citco Portal, launched in the

early 2000s—presents all the relevant data to clients, although it was difficult to drill into that information and move it around. Citco—as is the case with most fund admins—provides reconciliation data, portfolio and performance metrics, investor holdings, document statements, and regulatory services, among other areas.

Citco has always delivered these services, but with CitcoOne the administrator worked to create interactive tools to mine that information.

“We thought about things at the most granular level because that’s the world we live in, but if I’m a C-level person, I need things brought to the level that makes sense to me,” Eisenlau says. “I need a view of the world that in 60 seconds lets me know if it’s going to be

a good day or a bad day; I need things coming back to me that are more event driven; and I need to be able to drill into the more granular sets of information at the point that I want to—not be forced to at all times.”

A New Stack

CitcoOne is built on a D3 AngularJS stack, using HTML5 to provide more advanced visualization functions. Nothing in Citco’s environment is currently built on such a stack.

The key to CitcoOne is the drill-down it supports. The interface summarizes the portfolio, shows investor activity and documents, and separates data. From there, users can drill down into different entity structures, underlying portfolios, exposure data, full P&L, tracking, reconciliation, and full online financial statements, for daily and quarterly reports, depending on the fund and users’ requirements.

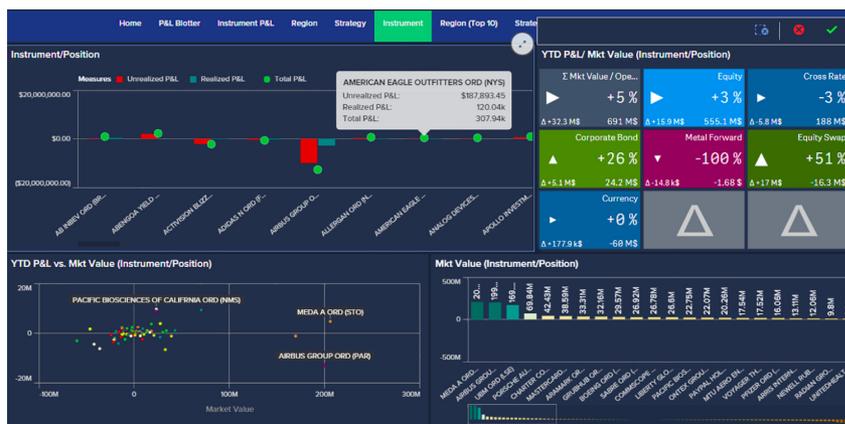
CitcoOne also features full interoperability with users’ desktops, where documents can be exported to Microsoft Excel, while its workflow has been improved using “breadcrumbs” so that users can easily go back-and-forth between reports, without having to constantly reload them.

“When we [first] looked at CitcoOne, one of the goals was to build tools that

Buy-Side Technology

May 9, 2016

waterstechnology.com/buy-side-technology



out like this: Look at P&L >> Where’s the portfolio currently? >> How does it look in terms of strategy? >> For any given strategy, how am I looking against all of my underlying instruments? >> How am I looking in various regions >> I can see it for today, but also see the effect on my month-to-date and year-to-date time series.

“We’re trying to preserve users’ time—that’s success,” Eisenlau explains. “If I can save you an hour of your day simply because you can get the answers you need, you know they’re right and you know they’re consistent, an hour is worth a ton in opportunity.”

Anthony Malakian

simplify that information for our users,” Eisenlau says. “That doesn’t mean we’re at war with [Microsoft] Excel—a lot of firms have tried that war and have miserably failed. We wanted to provide access to bring things down locally from the platform. The key is, can we give you one version of the truth that is actually verifiable and consistent across all the different toolsets that you’re looking at?”

Time Saver

And, as the buy side increasingly turns to their fund admins for regulatory support, CitcoOne will provide regulation-specific visualization mining.

“Each one of the different regulatory requirements will have its own set of visualization mining,” Eisenlau says. “Form PF will have one, AIFMD will have one, and Fatca will have one;

we won’t mix and match them into one visualization because you need different lenses to look at data.”

As an example of the new capabilities featured in CitcoOne, Eisenlau draws it

